

Dealing with Nervousness

SPEAKER: Chapter One: Preparing To Talk. Recent study show--now this is according to Dr. Kline, who wrote the book "Speaking Effectively." Recent study show that speaking in front of a group is by far the greatest fear of most people. It ranks ahead of fear of dying, riding in an airplane, or failure in other areas of one's personal life. Unless you are highly unusual at some time in your life, you have talked to a group of people and your knees begin shaking. Your voice quivered and your head ached. And the only dry place on your body get...

CONSCIENCE: Could this get any more boring?

SPEAKER: Who said that?

CONSCIENCE: I did.

SPEAKER: Who did?

CONSCIENCE: Me, you big dope, your conscience.

SPEAKER: My conscience? What do you want?

CONSCIENCE: I want to let you know that you're boring your audience. Look at them. Just look at them. It looks like they're ready to stick something in their eye just so they can get out of here.

SPEAKER: Wow, I didn't realize I was that bad. So, Conscience, if you're such an expert on what to do, why don't you give me some tips?

CONSCIENCE: Well, for starters, you can reduce the size of your head. I mean, come on, that's a really big melon.

SPEAKER: Thanks a lot, Conscience.

CONSCIENCE: No problem, big guy, I'm just trying to keep you on your toes.

SPEAKER: Seriously, Conscience, what do I need to do?

CONSCIENCE: Well, for starters, you need to move around a little and look at your students when you talk to them. You can also add a little variety to your voice to hold your students' attention, also try and show some enthusiasm for your subject and use some gestures that mirror your presentation. Finally, be confident. You were chosen to deliver this lesson for a reason. You're smart, a good communicator, and extremely good looking.

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SPEAKER: Wow. Well, thanks, Conscience, that's some pretty good advice. I think I'll take it from here.

CONSCIENCE: No problem. In fact, maybe let's do lunch some time and have a great lesson, old buddy of mine.

SPEAKER: All right. Good stuff from my conscience. He always keeps me in check. All right, presentation skills. You know what? You can have the greatest lesson in the world. You could prepare it absolutely without any flaws in it at all, you know? You spent all this time on your lesson plan, you spent all this time getting these great exercises together, you've worked on your intro, you've worked on your summary, and next thing you know you've got to get up there and present and you forgot probably some of the most important things of all, and those are the what?

MAN: Objective.

SPEAKER: Not the objective, your physical behaviors. All right? I'm talking about things like trying to control your nervousness. I'm talking about things like effective gestures and eye contact and movement. Those are all very important things. Voice. And there's some very important things that we're gonna talk about today that when I first started speaking I didn't give one second to thought about. I didn't think about them at all. And I had people that said to me, they said, "You know what? You're a very good speaker, but you might wanna start thinking about some of these things. I'll help--I'll kinda give you some of those tips later on." But for now the objective of this lesson is nothing more than—thanks, Carol, you're awesome. All right, let's see here. The objective of this lesson is basically that given an instructional setting, we want you to apply effective presentation skills, all right, in accordance with our course performance standards for instruction. Now, we do have--we keep referring to those standards all week long. And Sheila is gonna go over those with you in just a few--after this lesson. Okay, she's gonna go over that checklist. She's gonna tell you, "Here's what we're looking for." All right? But we are talking mainly about the physical behaviors in this lesson, okay? Controlling the nervousness and things like that. Now, Tracy, that's the checklist. All right, where's Tracy? I always like, you know, making fun of Tracy. There we go. By the way, Tracy is also going to do the--she's one of our

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volunteers for Friday. So I'm still looking for one more, okay?

TRACY: [INDISCERNIBLE].

SPEAKER: Be quiet, Tracy, you're in on Friday. All right. Let's see here, but how are we gonna get to that objective? All right. First thing we're gonna talk about is we're gonna talk about dealing with nervousness. Then we're gonna talk about the keys to an effective presentation. We're gonna talk about physical behaviors. And then finally we're gonna do a little bit of an exercise. All right? Any questions so far? All right. Excellent. Dealing with nervousness. All right. Let's see here. I think I asked you on the first day if you were nervous. How many people in here are nervous about their five-minute presentation today? Oh, so you lied to me on Monday because when I said, "Are you nervous," everybody was like...got it covered. Now we're nervous. Okay. Why are adults nervous? Why are adults nervous to give a presentation? Why?

MAN: We don't like to look foolish.

SPEAKER: We don't like to look foolish. All right, very nice. What other reasons?

MAN: Possible criticism.

SPEAKER: You might get criticized, absolutely. That's a great one. Anything else?

WOMAN: You might say something wrong, and somebody from the audience might know more than you do. [INDISCERNIBLE].

SPEAKER: Well, I'll tell you what, in the BLM, that's a big one, isn't it? Because I know for a fact that we kinda travel in packs when we go do training here in the BLM. You know, you go out, it's not like, you know, it's just me and Sheila and Carol in the back. You know, I've seen courses where especially Patty's gang, they go teach a course. She brings in like 12 instructors. You know, it's tough. You know, you sit there trying to teach a lesson and you're sweating because which of my peers and possibly even a student, right, might do what?

WOMAN: Correct you.

SPEAKER: Correct you, all right? Is that okay, by the way? Can I be corrected?

MAN: Yes.

SPEAKER: Yeah, sure. Is there a right or a wrong way to do it?

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MAN: Yes.

SPEAKER: Yeah, absolutely. Yes, ma'am.

WOMAN: I think all the time and energy and [INDISCERNIBLE] enthusiasm that--you're teaching us because [INDISCERNIBLE] enthusiasm about it and you're--you just wanted to do good. I mean, there's just so much [INDISCERNIBLE] to do a good presentation that [INDISCERNIBLE] my nervousness comes from [INDISCERNIBLE].

SPEAKER: Yeah, absolutely.

WOMAN: It's not that I'm gonna be criticized or anything [INDISCERNIBLE] will make it only better but it's just...

SPEAKER: Very nice, very nice. Any other reasons? And we're gonna talk about that in a little bit more in just a second. Any other reasons we get nervous?

WOMAN: Lack of self-confidence.

SPEAKER: Okay, absolutely. You may not have the self-esteem or the self-confidence. Now, I remember Carol was talking to us the other day. She was saying, "Are we gonna talk about Maslow during the week?" And I was like, "Ah, we probably don't have a lot of time." But that's where Maslow ties in. Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Ego and self-esteem play into your presentations. But anyways, we're not gonna get into Maslow. We're gonna stick to just dealing with nervousness. Let's talk about some other options that are available to you. You have mentioned some of them up here, but let's see about some other ones. Utilize self-talk. What is that? "Hey, Carrie. How are you doing?" You know, is it me talking to my conscience?

WOMAN: Yeah.

SPEAKER: But what does that mean, utilize self-talk. What does that mean?

WOMAN: Make it positive.

SPEAKER: Keep going on. Right there, you guys jump on--what do you guys think?

WOMAN: Knock yourself out.

SPEAKER: What do you mean?

WOMAN: [INDISCERNIBLE] is just fine. Everything is great. People aren't gonna bite you.

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SPEAKER: Okay. Very nice, absolutely. Anything else you could tell yourself?

WOMAN: I really know this material really well.

SPEAKER: I've been doing this for how long?

MAN: It's like affirmation.

SPEAKER: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, positive affirmation. Absolutely. What else could you tell yourself?

MAN: The main purpose is trying to help your students.

SPEAKER: Yeah, they want--your students want you to what?

MAN: To succeed.

SPEAKER: Yeah, absolutely. Take some deep breathes. Now, I'm just curious as we go through this, has anybody used utilize self-talk? Yeah? Oh, you have, Mark, huh? What do you tell yourself?

MAN: I'd say this is not a big deal.

SPEAKER: Okay. He said not a big deal.

MAN: I do that before every time I have to speak because I get pretty wound up because I wanted to [INDISCERNIBLE] right information and I'd just say this is not that big a deal. And then it helps. It really does help.

SPEAKER: Good. Awesome. You know, because in reality when people are opening their Christmas presents on Christmas morning, are you gonna be remembering how bad that presentation was that Mark gave on Wednesday?

MAN: Yes. [INDISCERNIBLE].

SPEAKER: Yeah. Chances are you're probably--even if it--you know, it could be the greatest presentation in the world when you're opening presents. You're not gonna be thinking about it at all. All right? He's right. In the grand scheme of things, it's not that big of a deal.

WOMAN: [INDISCERNIBLE] book where it says I always picture myself after it's over...

SPEAKER: Uh-huh.

WOMAN: ...you know, an hour later or two hours, depending on the length of the presentation or

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session, like, "Okay, I will still be the same person, most likely." [INDISCERNIBLE] and again it's really not that big of a deal, and that's just a little bit of time. And I always look to [INDISCERNIBLE].

SPEAKER: Very nice, very nice. Anybody else? Anything else? All right, take in some deep breaths. Do people do that? Like, has anybody tried that before you get ready to start? Yeah. How does that help you, you think?

MAN: You either pass out.

SPEAKER: Pass out? Yeah, that way you don't have to worry about it anymore, right?

MAN: Yeah.

SPEAKER: Yeah, okay. Well, obviously, what's going on with your body? What kind of physiological things are going on before you give a presentation?

WOMAN: Rapid heart rate.

SPEAKER: Rapid heart rate. What else?

WOMAN: Muscles get tighter.

SPEAKER: Oh, muscles start getting tight. Okay, what else?

WOMAN: Hyperventilating.

SPEAKER: What's that?

WOMAN: Hyperventilating.

SPEAKER: Hyperventilating.

MAN: Sweaty.

SPEAKER: Sweaty. Sweaty palms, all of those things. And maybe if you just try to control that, just try to relax as best as you can. Get that heart rate down a little bit. Take some deep breaths. Maybe that will help you a little bit. Now, again, these are tips. Every one of these tips is not for you. You got to find the ones that are for you, because we haven't got to mind yet, practice an opening. Wow, does that sound familiar? Are you guys gonna practice an opening? Why do we say practice the opening? How would that help nervousness?

WOMAN: Because it's always the toughest part.

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SPEAKER: Say it again.

WOMAN: It breaks the ice.

SPEAKER: Okay, it breaks the ice.

WOMAN: Because it's always the toughest part. Once you get a couple of minutes into it, then things get into the groove.

SPEAKER: Yeah. What do you mean "everything gets into a groove?"

WOMAN: I don't know.

MAN: You start a flow.

SPEAKER: You start a flow.

MAN: You start flowing with your space and you forget about your nervousness.

SPEAKER: Yeah. In other words, physiologically, do you begin to change after a couple of minutes? What happens?

WOMAN: The heart rate slows down.

MAN: You relax.

SPEAKER: You relax. You realize what? Not that big of a deal. And it--you know what? I think one of the greatest openings, practice an opening. Now we're talking about the intro, but I'm talking about also that very first thing you do. Have you ever seen--I did it this week. But you might wanna think about an opening that relaxes you and something that takes the focus off of you. Like, what's something you could do when you first get up here that you could take the focus completely off of you?

MAN: [INDISCERNIBLE] video.

MAN: Ask a question.

SPEAKER: Oh, you could do a video, you could ask a question. Absolutely. And then once people start talking and giving you things back, you're gonna find your--you're gonna relax. Maybe after the first couple of minutes, you're gonna be good, all right? All right, good stuff. Here's mine, appear to be calm. What are we talking about, appear to be calm?

MAN: Self-confidence.

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SPEAKER: Self-confidence. I have done this how many times?

MAN: Once.

SPEAKER: Once? And I'm gonna do it well. It kinda links up to self-talk a little bit. But I remember the first time--I mentioned a couple of times, boy, teaching in the Air Force, well, I'll tell you what, you talk about some pressure they put on you, cameras in the room. You got to hit everything exactly perfect. The lesson plan, you know what? You can kind of tinker with it--well, a little bit--but, you know, they want you to make sure you get everything in that lesson to the students. You gotta have a great discussion. You gotta make sure everybody in the room is participating so you gotta get everybody involved. And, boy, I tell you what--plus you gotta be dressed sharp, to the hilt. You know, you're walking in, popping on the first day, and everybody is looking at you going, "Oh, the military training instructor." Boy, I'll tell you what, it's a lot of pressure. But you just keep walking. Appear to be calm, confidence. It just breeds itself. It's really good stuff. Anybody done the next one, seek a friendly face? [PH] Olie.

MAN: I tried too. That's when I give my presentation. I look at everybody, and I try to get there early and say I know these people. They're not gonna drill me.

SPEAKER: Absolutely. Absolutely.

MAN: It kinds of calm you down and relax you a little bit.

SPEAKER: Anybody else, seek a friendly face? Yes.

WOMAN: There's usually someone in the audience who will give you positive feedback and keep giving you, "Yeah, you're doing great. You're doing great." They acknowledge your question and they smile at you [INDISCERNIBLE].

SPEAKER: Now there is a danger, isn't there? Don't fall in love with that person, okay?

MAN: Yeah.

SPEAKER: All right. For the rest of the presentation, you're like teaching only to that person. "Hi, Brenda." Hugs and kisses. All right, fantastic. See, describe your credentials. What do you guys think about that? Does anybody start off with that?

MAN: Yeah.

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SPEAKER: Yeah. That can help. I mean, you know, it's whatever is gonna work for you, all right? Now, again, we talked about credentials. Just be careful because you're gonna be nervous. And you might have a tendency when you start talking about yourself because you're nervous to do what?

WOMAN: Talk too much.

SPEAKER: Talk too much about yourself, all right? It's great, 43 degrees, not outside. Forty-three different types of educational degrees is great, but we don't need to hear about every one and we don't wanna hear about all your papers and books that you wrote and all that stuff. Keep it short but you can certainly do that. How about this next one? Anybody ever tried the old laughter joke? Yeah, how'd that work for you?

MAN: Excellent.

SPEAKER: Did it really?

MAN: Yeah.

SPEAKER: Were you concerned or worried about it?

WOMAN: Let's hear it.

SPEAKER: Yeah, do you remember what it was? Did you try a joke? Is that what you tried?

MAN: Usually, I'd find a way to be kinda self-deprecating. So I'll say something that puts me on an even level with the audience and then it makes them laugh.

SPEAKER: Okay, very nice, very nice.

MAN: [INDISCERNIBLE].

SPEAKER: Okay. Anybody else? Has anybody else tried it? Yeah? What'd you come up with?

MAN: Don't be afraid to laugh at yourself, screw [INDISCERNIBLE].

SPEAKER: You know, that's my rule number one. I mean, you know, put them at ease. Take all-- because you know what, is your audience just--is your audience somewhat nervous and concerned as well? Yeah, adult learners come into the classroom with a lot of weight on their shoulders. What are you thinking? Oh, God. I hope he does or she doesn't do what?

MAN: Call on me.

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SPEAKER: Call on me. I don't wanna be the focus of attention. I don't wanna be what?

WOMAN: Humiliated.

SPEAKER: Yeah, humiliated, embarrassed. Absolutely. But laughter is a good way. Are there dangers associated with laughter?

WOMAN: [INDISCERNIBLE].

SPEAKER: What are they? Okay. Have you had a couple of failures there, Mark?

MAN: I have a mass of failures, because I tend to laugh sometimes when [INDISCERNIBLE] as a way of dealing with being nervous.

SPEAKER: Uh-huh.

MAN: And so I was in a public--conducting a public meeting and some people got pretty hostile and so I started laughing at them.

SPEAKER: Uh-huh. Well done, Mark! Well done!

MAN: Anyway, they started saying something and I thought it was kind of funny. Honestly, I laughed as a way to deal with the threat.

SPEAKER: Uh-huh.

MAN: And then they just erupted in chants and all kinds of stuff [INDISCERNIBLE]. Anyway, that is a danger. And the next time I'm just gonna remain extremely calm rather than [INDISCERNIBLE].

SPEAKER: Yeah, I tell you what, especially if you try to open up with a joke. All right? You know what, again, you're gonna do something like that, what must you consider prior to doing it?

WOMAN: That you're not gonna offend anybody.

SPEAKER: You're not gonna--so it's got--you're gonna eliminate any type of prejudices, biases. You're not gonna offend anybody. What else?

WOMAN: [INDISCERNIBLE] plan it into your topic sometimes.

SPEAKER: Well, that would help. And it would also help if you're gonna try to make them laugh, it's what?

WOMAN: [INDISCERNIBLE].

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SPEAKER: Yeah, there's nothing worse than kicking off your lesson and everybody--you tell a joke and everybody is doing what you're doing right now.

MAN: [INDISCERNIBLE].

SPEAKER: Well, anyways, we're gonna go ahead and press on with the lesson. And you feel kind of stupid. All right? Anyways. Okay. Let's see here. We talked about trainees being on your side. Are they? Nobody wants to come to what? What kind of training?

MAN: Boring.

SPEAKER: Yeah, boring or bad training. Nobody wants that. In fact, I'd be willing to wager that the reason people do not look forward to going to training is because traditionally training is what?

WOMAN: Boring.

SPEAKER: Yeah, we want to chew our arms off, absolutely, because it's not interactive. Everything we talked about this week, get your adults involved. Discussions and exercises--and I can tell you right now, adults love discussion. They love it. They wanna talk all day. And remember, does everybody deal with nervousness? Do I deal with nervousness?

MAN: Yes.

SPEAKER: Yes, I do. I am nervous before every lesson. Today, I was nervous before the lesson. Absolutely. But, is nervousness a good thing?

MAN: Yes.

SPEAKER: How so?

MAN: You can [INDISCERNIBLE].

SPEAKER: What do you mean?

MAN: I have to be very assuming [INDISCERNIBLE] kind of pick up the pace a little bit by showing a little bit more emotion, more enthusiasm.

SPEAKER: Right. Yes?

MAN: More adrenalin going, that sort of thing. [INDISCERNIBLE] to energize your presentation.

SPEAKER: Yeah. If you don't know have that nervousness, what might happen to your presentation?

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MAN: [INDISCERNIBLE].

SPEAKER: Yeah, you might be a little bit what?

MAN: Bland.

WOMAN: Flat.

SPEAKER: Yeah, a little bit flat. Maybe a little bland, you know? You need it. Get yourself pumped up and ready to go. All right. Fantastic transition, right? Now that we've talked a little bit about how to deal with nervousness, let's go ahead and talk about some keys to effective presentations.

[END AUDIO]